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The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1999 the Groningen Research School Rudolph Agricola and the local members of the national Netherlands Research School for Medieval Studies succeeded in obtaining a grant for a bonus incentive programme entitled ***Cultural Change: Dynamics and Diagnosis***. Supported by the faculties of Arts, Philosophy and Theology, and financed by the Board of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, the ***Cultural Change*** programme constitutes an excellent opportunity to promote multidisciplinary approaches of phenomena typical in transformation processes in the fields of art and politics, literature and history, philosophy and theology. In order to enhance cohesion, three crucial 'moments' in European history were selected: (1) the period from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages (*ca.* 200 - *ca.* 600); (2) the late medieval to early modern period (*ca.* 1450 - *ca.* 1650); and (3) the 'Long Nineteenth Century' (1789 - *ca.* 1918). Four international conferences and some twenty workshops are planned for the period 2000-2004.

This volume, the first in the new series ***Groningen Studies in Cultural Change***, offers the papers presented at the workshop ***The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*** held from 22 to 24 June 2000. The workshop was organised by Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, who are also the editors of this volume. The papers have been written by scholars from such varying disciplines as classics, theology, philosophy, cultural history, and law, and they present a stimulating overview of the status, usage and changing perception of magic in two important eras of cultural change in **Western** history: the era that witnessed the rise of Christianity in Late Antiquity, and the era that marked the period from the rise of learning in medieval Europe to the dawn of modern society. Both editors have added an additional paper.

We thank the Board of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen for the financial support it gave to the ***Cultural Change*** programme; this is the first programme uniting several faculties and two research schools in a unique project based on a multidisciplinary approach to subjects in the field of the humanities. Last but not least, we should like to thank **Mirjam Buigel-de Witte** and **Marijke Wubbolts** for their assistance in **organising** the workshop, and Nella Gosman-Scholtens and Jan Veenstra for preparing the texts for publication.

Martin Gosman, General Editor